97-84099-1

Grose, Helen

Our immigration problem and propositions for its...

[Greencastle, Ind.]

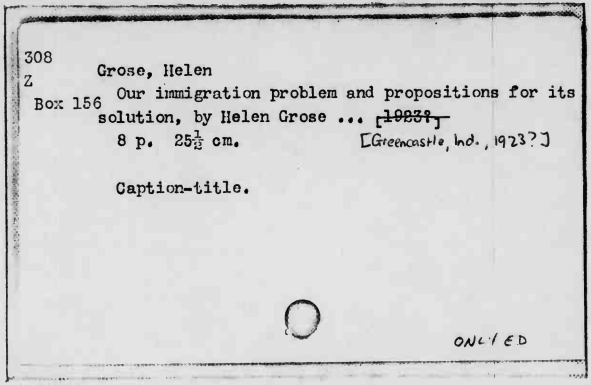
[1923]

97-84099-1
MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD



308
Z
Box 156

Grose, Helen
Our immigration problem and propositions for its solution, by Helen Grose ... [~~1923?~~]
8 p. 25½ cm. [Greencastle, Ind., 1923?]

Caption-title.

ONLINED

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: *Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.*

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 11:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 5/27/97 INITIALS: TLM

TRACKING # : 23059

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

PM-MGP
METRIC GENERAL PURPOSE TARGET
PHOTOGRAPHIC

PRECISION℠ RESOLUTION TARGETS

A&P International
2715 Upper Afton Road, St. Paul, MN 55119-4760
612/738-9329 FAX 612/738-1496

308
Z
Box 156

OUR IMMIGRATION PROBLEM AND PROPOSITIONS FOR ITS SOLUTION

BY HELEN GROSE
(A Young College Girl)

Outline

I Introduction

1 History.

2 The problem—Americanization of the alien before we are alienized.

II Possible Solutions

1 Absolute exclusion.

2 A law based on the census of 1890.

3 Selection abroad.

4 Lax laws.

III Opposing Views

1 Economic.
a Non-restriction vs. restriction.

2 Biologic.
a Restriction.

IV Conclusion

Practicability of law based on 1890 census combined with policy of selection.

OUR IMMIGRATION PROBLEM AND PROPOSITIONS FOR ITS SOLUTION

Sentimentally America is known as the "haven for all politically and religiously oppressed." Before 1882 this was practically true. The "melting pot" was a reality. Whatever legislation was necessary on immigration was left to individual states. The history of our immigration legislation falls in four periods.

The first dates from colonial times to 1835. The responsibility was entirely upon the states and the only action was a law in 1819 providing for the comfort of steerage passengers and requiring that statistical records be kept by the states.

The second period from 1835 to 1860 was marked by the "Native American" or "Know Nothing" movement, based on opposition to the immigration of Roman Catholics. They demanded a repeal of naturalization laws and the appointment to office of only native Americans.

The end of state control defined the third period 1861-1882. In 1864 Congress passed a law to encourage immigration by direct legislation. By this law a Commissioner of Immigration was appointed to act under the Department of State. During the decade 1870-1880 the inadequacy of state control was much discussed. Various questions on immigration had come before the Supreme Court previous to this time. In 1876 the United States Supreme Court declared that state control of immigration was unconstitutional, and turned the whole matter over to Congress.

The period of national control dates from 1882 to the present time. In 1882 the first general immigration law was approved. Three years later an act was passed forbidding the importation of contract labor, but it made no provision for inspection or deportation so it was amended in 1887. Between 1882 and 1888 numerous bills were introduced but no action was taken. In 1889 two committees were established, a standing Committee on Immigration in the Senate and a Select Committee in the House. In 1891 the office of Superintendent of Immigration was authorized and federal control made complete. The agitation for more legislation continued but there were no enactments. In 1903 the final report on immigration of the investigations of the Industrial Commission was given with recommendations and a bill was passed. In 1907 an act creating an Immigration Commission was passed and some changes made in the bill of 1903.

Both of these laws were repealed by the Act of February, 1917 based on writing test for restriction. This was passed in both houses over President Wilson's veto. The Per Centum Limit Act of 1921 supplemented the act of 1917. This provided that aliens should be admitted up to three per cent of the number of that nationality resident in this country according to the census of 1910. Only twenty per cent of the annual quota could be admitted in any given month. This act expired in May, 1922, but by a joint resolution in the House and Senate its operation was extended to June, 1924.

Asiatic immigration is not included under this legislation. This was regulated by the Pacific Coast states up to 1862 when the government stepped in and declared all former acts unconstitutional. In 1879 an act excluding Chinese was passed, and modified in 1888 to exclude all laborers for ten years. In 1894 an exclusion treaty was ratified with China. This law continues in force. One act of 1907 excluding Japanese trying to come in by Mexico and Canada, and the 1913 Alien Landholding Act which has caused friction with Japan, form the extent of our important legislation concerning the Japanese.

This brief sketch of our legislation on immigration conveys some idea of how little attention has been paid to the subject.

Our present three per cent law is a temporary emergency measure, which will expire June, 1924. Do we want to open our country to the flood of immigrants who are ready to pour into the United States, who are waiting for the "bars to be let down," or are we going to restrict this tide and choose the people who are to be our future citizens?

*In the last few decades our country has been flooded with successive waves of Italians, Greeks, Lithuanians, Poles, Jews and Tartars, welcomed for only one reason—that they provided obedient muscle power. They might and did come with bitterness against all law and government, with loathsome physical standards, with superstition and racial hatreds, with customs rooted in an immemorial and alien past. They might be socialists, atheists, or of every breed, tradition and purpose, determined to live their own lives and alter ours to suit theirs, to intermarry with our stock and erect a new nation of mongrel blood, many languages, and unsound laws. *(French Strother, 1923) A good deal of popular discussion has assumed that because there is no race theoretically pure, that it makes no difference how impure it is or how the stocks are mixed. Because America was an uninhabited continent and had to be settled by outsiders it has been called an "immigrant nation." This idea is wrong because the essentials of our life and character were founded by a definite Anglo-Saxon stock, and from it developed destinguishable American types.

"These truths are self-evident:

1 That American civilization both in culture and character has its roots in Anglo-Saxon soil.

2 Such culture and character developed distinctly new and American political and social institutions.

3 That American democracy is not merely a form of government, but fundamentally a society, 'a community so closely knit by sentiment and tradition, interest and aspiration that it is a psychological organism possessed of a single consciousness and a common will.'

4 That these traits were developed by men fundamentally alike in essentials of mind and character." (Speranza, 1923)

More necessary than political unity is social and spiritual unity in a democracy. The closer the likeness in thought and ideals the more smoothly will run the institutions of a nation. Immigration much di-

versified has begun to disintegrate our homogeneity. "Imagine a community peopled by men of whom one believed himself to be the reincarnation of Julius Caesar, another that he was the heir of Attila, a third that he was the offspring of Alfred the Great, a fourth that he re-embodies George Washington, and conceive these men trying to operate a social order designed by Confucius and a government founded by Genghis Khan. Would the result be Chinese or chaos?" (Strother, 1923)

*This is really what we are trying to do. We are trying to operate a social order which grew out of the experiences of the English race, and a government the result of a common experience of life, and we are attempting to work with not one but a dozen racial elements whose ideas are directly in opposition to those of our native stock. *(Strother, 1923) "The greater the differences from our historic homogeneity the greater is the strain on American civilization. Because of their greatly increasing numbers these differentiating elements solidify their differences and resist absorption." (Speranza, 1923) *Our life is impoverished by these new elements because they confuse and destroy its singleness of purpose. For example trial by jury, one of our most zealously guarded institutions, will lose its effect if the attitudes of the jurymen are colored by racial viewpoints that affect the attitudes of men of different inheritances toward the same facts. *(Strother, 1923)

Not even does the second generation think as we do or live our life. We have miniatures of all the emigrating countries of Europe scattered over the United States. Our experiment with the negro shows the enormous size of our indigestible population. It has become a question of whether the alien will alienize America or whether we can first Americanize the alien. According to Mr. Robert C. Ward (1919), Americanization involves four things—education, assimilation, Americanization and naturalization. This cannot be accomplished in a short time and with a continual influx of indiscriminate aliens. We must make possible conditions under which this program will be able to work effectively. Public sentiment in America is becoming alive to this need. There are various opinions expressed as to the solution of this problem by different groups in our country today. Some advocate absolute exclusion, at least for a sufficient number of years to enable us to Americanize our present alien population. Others are in favor of the present three per cent law made more rigid by changing the basis from the census of 1910 to the census of 1890. This would mean a greater number of northwest Europeans and would exclude the hordes of southeast Europe. Another group is promoting the plan of selective immigration which involves the establishment of examining boards at all ports of emigration. The fourth group, who are decidedly in the minority, favor lax laws, almost the old "open door" policy.

The chief controversy on the subject of immigration arises between two groups, one looking at the problem from the economic standpoint, the other from that of a biologist. The outcome of this struggle will likely decide the policy of our pending legislation. The economic side is supported principally by big business. It stands for non-restriction. This support, however, is in varying degrees. For instance, the Association

of the Contractors of America blame the shortage of labor in construction work entirely on the restriction of the three per cent law. They advocate lax laws. Certain timber companies in the Northwest say that the native Americans will not do their work, and they must import Austrians for it. The national Liberal Immigration League says that we want workers, not voters. They want laborers to be admitted freely, subject to deportation, and are in favor of placing the restriction not on their coming but on the requirements for citizenship. The national Crushed Stone Association reports that in the year 1922 their output was distinctly curtailed because they were unable to obtain sufficient labor. This shortage has also affected road building and all kinds of construction. In their opinion immigration from Europe of laborers is the only remedy, and they urge modification of the present laws.

Some economists plead that for political reasons we cannot discriminate against any country. The quota based on the 1890 census is unfair and unfriendly to some nations. We cannot get our pick and shovel men any place else and pressure from the farms, mines and construction camps demands these laborers. The Chicago and North Western Railway Company have expressed their feeling that the present restrictions are both unnecessary and unwise. They need it to augment their labor supply. Many of the people discriminated against by our laws are worthy and should be encouraged to come.

On the other hand, some groups in our economic world favor restriction. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, expresses the sentiments of the Federation as being in favor of an Americanization campaign, benefited by restriction. Labor does not declare that America is for Americans alone, but it does insist that there should be such a restriction of immigration as will prevent disintegration of American economic standards. He says further that with many millions of unemployed in the United States the arrival of many aliens will only make the situation more acute. In the United States Veteran Bureau in Boston, three hundred applications a week are turned down because there are no jobs to be filled.

J. J. Davis, United States Secretary of Labor, in regard to the labor shortage says that it is natural for labor to be in demand. Employment is at normal, wages are on the upgrade, and production is greater than since 1917. The difficulty is that the so-called pick and shovel men of Europe are no more anxious for this work than Americans. They come here with other intentions. It is not that our men could not do the work, the trouble is that "big business" is trying, not to fill the labor shortage, if one exists, but to get cheap labor. Our American men will not do the work because they cannot and will not compete with cheap labor. In the opinion of most people we need men of brawn, but is that what we want? Cheap labor means cheap Americans. Public opinion should demand American labor living according to American standards.

The biologists' side of the controversy has been called the "far-sighted" side. From this point of view the American stock is in danger of degenerating and becoming mongrelized unless adequate steps are

taken to change the tide of immigration from those races practically unassimilable to those from which our stock came.

We need an immigration policy and a law that will operate solely for the benefit of America, the America of today and of the future. "It is the right and duty of the United States to protect every citizen of today and tomorrow from contact with the mental, moral and physical delinquents of the world. We must see to it that the men and women who come to us from abroad are fit to be the parents of a great race." (J. J. Davis 1923) We must not permit foreign judges to sentence their criminals in the words "America or jail." All the countries of the world are anxious to be rid of their delinquents and criminals. Are we to be their dumping ground?

"The world is just beginning to understand the result of the mixtures of races—namely, a mongrel race. Mixture causes a reversion to the ancient generalized, lower type. The white race mixed with Indian results in an Indian, white mixed with negro is negro, with Jew is Jew. When this principle becomes more generally known, that the children of mixed marriages between contrasted races belong to lower types, the importance of transmitting in unimpaired purity the blood inheritance of the ages, will be appreciated at its full value. When two distinct species are side by side either one is driven out or they amalgamate and form a population of race bastards in which the lowest type predominates." (Grant, 1916) Some sociologists say that if we had debarred the aliens of eastern and southern Europe long ago our population would be as large today with citizens of real American type. There would have been no dearth of men to do physical labor for our old notions of hard work would not have been altered by this Eurpean invasion. Immigration of the lowest types is crowding us out. "If the 'survival of the fittest' holds good it will mean the survival of those best adapted to the existing environment of today, the tenement and factory. From the point of view of race, it means the 'survival of the unfit.' This race feeling is not just prejudice, but a natural desire to maintain the purity of type and keep up a high strain." (Grant, 1916, Pp. 80, 193)

*Idealists who talk about America as an asylum for the oppressed of the world do not seem to realize how truly it is becoming an "asylum." An insane asylum and penitentiary is the result of this indiscriminate hospitality. *(Robert C. Ward, 1919) Statistics from a recent investigation made by D. H. H. Laughlin of the Carnegie Institute show the truth of this statement. After examining four hundred forty-five of the existing six hundred sixty-seven state and federal custodial institutions he found that forty-four per cent of all inmates were of foreign or mixed parentage. The recent immigrants present a higher percentage of inborn socially inadequate qualities than do the older stocks. This inferiority is shown mainly in insanity. The fact that the record of both crime and insanity in the second generation is higher shows a defect in the stock which our environment does not help. These facts show how dangerous is the mixture of our stock with these people. Considering the problem from a financial viewpoint, it would be of great advantage to us to reduce the number of these inadequates, because over seven per

cent of our total taxes is required to maintain institutions to care for them. They are costing us billions of dollars and most of them have never paid a cent of taxes. Taking these things into consideration, the generous and American thing for us as custodians of the future heritage of our race to do is to prohibit the landing of mental, physical and moral defectives, who themselves and through their defendants will lower the stock of our people and increase the problems of public and private philanthropy.

After weighing the arguments of big business as opposed by more public-spirited economists and the evidence from the biologists' viewpoint it seems that Americans can take but one view, the "long view" which looks not to the increase of our immediate economic prosperity, but to the future welfare and the continuation of our race. This should be the ideal in the minds of our statesmen as they frame our government policy and permanent law on immigration. Those who fear the enmity of other nations if we make such a law protecting ourselves must remember that other nations frame their policies and laws to their own advantage and we have the same right.

Concerning the proposals for legislation stated above, from a biologic standpoint a two per cent law based on the census of 1890 combined with a policy of selection abroad would in the opinion of many be most effective. To satisfy the legitimate demands for labor, we should provide that all immigration to the United States should be such that is needed by us for definite purposes. *This business of immigration must be removed from politics and handled as a business proposition, studied and regulated scientifically. *(K. L. Roberts, 1922)

The idea of selection abroad has been tried by Canada and has proved successful. It would involve making treaties with foreign governments to insure their co-operation in selecting physically, mentally and morally fit for prospective emigrants. The objection raised by some that this would involve the violation of the sovereignity of these nations does not hold good. We could, with the consent of the country, add an examining board to our consular service without inflicting them with any extra-territorial claims. If we had an efficient selective system the numerical quota would not be such a problem. It is not quantity that we need to regulate as much as quality. The basis should be our needs. Some patriotic Americans who are living in southern Europe at the present time realize the importance of this selection abroad. They are showing us that it can be done. In Constantinople they have formed at their own expense an examining board to prevent undesirable Russians and Turks who are anxious to come to this country from getting passage. Mr. Strother has made a neat summary of the problem and its proposed solution based on a recent examination of the facts made by Gino Speranza, a specialist on immigration. He says that the three per cent law is a step in the right direction but it must be made more effective. Its defects lie in the fact that the number of unassimilable southeast Europeans is too high and the number of Nordics is too low. And finally, that selection rests wholly with the countries who send these individuals, and

not at all with us who are expected to receive them as permanent citizens. These things may be corrected, by changing the quota basis from the census of 1910 to the census of 1890 to eliminate southeast Europeans. Then we should apply our tests of admission in the immigrant's native land, and not after he reaches an American port. The statistics are obtainable concerning his inheritance and character, but when we leave examinations until he arrives we cannot be sure that we have honest records. Our policy should be positive instead of negative. We should choose those we want and need rather than lay all the emphasis on the exclusion of undesirables. We should organize in America a government department to obtain facts about our need for new blood, where and how many are needed and in what occupation, and in co-operation with this we should maintain abroad agencies to find men of these descriptions and make it possible for them to come.

These ideas could be incorporated in the thing we all desire, a comprehensive, scientific and permanent law.

HELEN GROSE.
Junior, DePauw University,
Greencastle, Ind.

MSH 23059

END OF
TITLE